BRITANNIA.

A

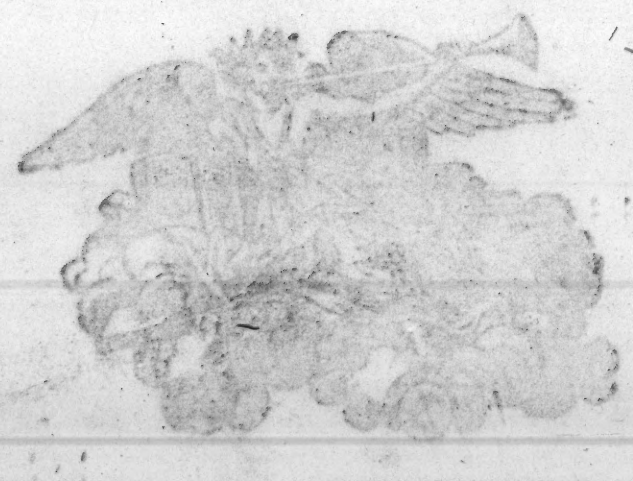
POEM.

——— *Et tantas audetis tollere Moles?*
Quos Ego — ſed motos præſtat componere Fluctus.
Poſt mihi non ſimili Pœna commiſſa luetis.
Maturate Fugam, Regique hæc dicite veſtro:
Non illi Imperium Pelagi, Sævumque Tridentem,
Sed mihi ſorte datum. ——— VIRG.

LONDON:
Printed for T. WARNER, at the *Black-Boy*, in *Pater-Noſter-Row.* M.DCC XXIX.

POEM.

BRITISH MUSEUM



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BRITANNIA.

A

POEM.

AS on the Sea-beat Shore BRITANNIA ſat,
Of her degenerate Sons, the faded Fame,
Deep in her anxious Heart revolving ſad:
Bare was her throbbing Boſom to the Gale,
That hoarſe, and hollow, from the bleak Surge blew;
Looſe flow'd her Treſſes; Rent her Azure Robe
Hung o'er the Deep: from her Majeſtick Brow
She tore the Laurel, and ſhe tore the Bay.
Nor ceas'd the copious Grief to bathe her Cheek;

Nor ceas'd her Sobs to murmur to the Main.

Peace diſcontented nigh, departing, ſtretch'd
Her Dove-like Wings. And *War*, tho' greatly rous'd,
Yet mourn'd his fetter'd Hands. While thus the *Queen*
Of Nations ſpoke; and what ſhe ſaid the *Muſe*
Recorded, faithful, in unbidden Verſe.

EVEN not yon Sail, that, from the Sky-mixt Wave,
Dawns on the Sight, and wafts the ROYAL YOUTH,
A Fraight of future Glory to my Shore;
Even not the flattering View of golden Days,
And riſing Periods yet of bright Renown,
Beneath the PARENTS, and their endleſs Line
Thro' late revolving Time, can ſooth my Rage;
While, unchaſtis'd, the inſulting *Spaniard* dares
Infeſt the trading Flood, full of vain War
Deſpiſe my *Navies*, and my *Merchants* ſeize;
As, truſting to falſe Peace, they fearleſs roam
The World of Waters wild, made, by the Toil,
And liberal Blood of glorious Ages, mine:
Nor burſts my ſleeping Thunder on their Head.
Whence this unwonted Patience? This weak Doubt?
This tame Beſeeching of rejected Peace?
This meek Forbearance? This unnative Fear,
To generous *Britons* never known before?

And

And ſail'd my *Fleets* for this; on *Indian* Tides
To float, unactive, with the veering Winds?
The Mockery of War! While foul Diſeaſe,
And Sloth diſtemper'd, ſwept off burning Crowds,
For Action ardent; and amid the Deep,
Inglorious, ſunk Them in a watry Grave.
There now they lie beneath the rowling Flood,
Far from their Friends, and Country unaveng'd;
And back the weeping *War-Ship* comes again,
Diſpirited, and thin; her Sons aſham'd
Thus idly to review their native Shore;
With not one Glory ſparkling in their Eye,
One Triumph on their Tongue. A Paſſenger,
The violated *Merchant* comes along;
That far-ſought Wealth, for which the noxious Gale
He drew, and ſweat beneath Equator Suns,
By lawleſs Force detain'd; a Force that ſoon
Would melt away, and every Spoil reſign,
Were once the *Britiſh Lyon* heard to roar.
Whence is it that the proud *Iberian* thus,
In their own well-aſſerted Element,
Dares rouze to Wrath the *Maſters of the Main?*
Who told him, that the big, incumbent *War*
Would not, ere this, have rowl'd his trembling Ports
In ſmoaky Ruin? And his guilty Stores,

Won by the Ravage of a butcher'd World,
Yet unatton'd, ſunk in the ſwallowing Deep,
Or led the glittering Prize into the *Thames*?

THERE was a Time (Oh let my languid Sons
Reſume their Spirit at the rouzing Thought!)
When all the Pride of *Spain*, in one dread Fleet,
Swell'd o'er the labring Surge; like a whole Heaven
Of Clouds, wide-roll'd before the boundleſs Breeze,
Gaily the ſplendid *Armament* along
Exultant plow'd, reflecting a red Gleam,
As ſunk the Sun, o'er all the flaming Vaſt;
Tall, gorgeous, and elate; drunk with the Dream
Of eaſy Conqueſt; while their bloated War,
Stretch'd out from Sky to Sky, the gather'd Force
Of Ages held in its capacious Womb.
But ſoon, regardleſs of the cumbrous Pomp,
My dauntleſs *Britons* came, a gloomy Few,
With Tempeſt black, the goodly Scene deform'd,
And laid their Glory waſte. The Bolts of Fate
Reſiſtleſs thunder'd thro' their yielding Sides;
Fierce o'er their Beauty blaz'd the lurid Flame;
And ſeiz'd in horrid Graſp, or ſhatter'd wide,
Amid the mighty Waters, deep they ſunk.
Then too from every Promontory chill,

Rank Fen, and Cavern where the wild Wave works,
I ſwept confederate Winds, and ſwell'd a Storm.
Round the glad Iſle, ſnatch'd by the vengeful Blaſt,
The ſcatter'd Remnants drove; on the blind Shelve,
And pointed Rock, that marks the indented Shore,
Relentleſs daſh'd, where loud the *Northern Main*
Howls thro' the fractur'd *Caledonian* Iſles.

SUCH were the Dawnings of my liquid Reign;
But ſince how vaſt it grew, how abſolute,
Even in thoſe troubled Times, when dreadful *Blake*
Aw'd angry Nations with the *Britiſh Name*,
Let every humbled State, let *Europe* ſay,
Suſtain'd, and ballanc'd, by my *Naval Arm*.
Ah what muſt theſe immortal Spirits think
Of your poor Shifts? Theſe, for their Country's Good,
Who fac'd the blackeſt Danger, knew no Fear,
No mean Submiſſion, but commanded Peace.
Ah how with Indignation muſt they burn?
(If ought, but Joy, can touch ætherial Breaſts)
With Shame? With Grief? To ſee their feeble Sons
Shrink from that Empire o'er the conquer'd Seas,
For which their Wiſdom plann'd, their Councils glow'd,
And their Veins bled thro' many a toiling Age.

Oh first of human Bleſſings! and Supreme!
Fair Peace! how lovely, how delightful thou!
By whoſe wide Tie, the kindred Sons of Men,
Like Brothers live, in Amity combin'd,
And unſuſpicious Faith; while honeſt *Toil*
Gives every Joy, and to thoſe Joys a Right,
Which idle, barbarous *Rapine* but uſurps.
Pure is thy Reign; when, unaccurs'd by Blood,
Nought, ſave the Sweetneſs of indulgent Showers,
Trickling diſtils into the vernant Glebe;
Inſtead of mangled Carcaſſes, ſad-ſeen,
When the blythe Sheaves lie ſcatter'd o'er the Field;
When only ſhining Shares, the crooked Knife,
And Hooks imprint the vegetable Wound;
When the Land bluſhes with the Roſe alone,
The falling Fruitage, and the bleeding Vine.
Oh, Peace! thou Source, and Soul of ſocial Life;
Beneath whoſe calm, inſpiring Influence,
Science his Views inlarges, *Art* refines,
And ſwelling *Commerce* opens all her Ports;
Bleſt be the *Man divine*, who gives us Thee!
Who bids the Trumpet huſh his horrid Clang,
Nor blow the giddy Nations into Rage;
Who ſheaths the murdrous Blade; the deadly Gun

Into the well-pil'd Armoury returns;
And, every Vigour, from the Work of Death,
To grateful Induſtry converting, makes.
The City flouriſh, and the Country ſmile.
Unviolated, Him the Virgin ſings;
And Him the ſmiling Mother to her Train.
Of Him the Shepherd, in the peaceful Dale,
Chaunts; and, the Treaſures of his Labour ſure,
The Husbandman of Him, as at the Plow,
Or Team, He toils. With Him the Sailor ſooths,
Beneath the trembling Moon, the Midnight Wave;
And the full City, warm, from Street to Street,
And Shop to Shop, reſponſive, rings of Him.
Nor joys one Land alone; his Praiſe extends
Far as the Sun rolls the diffuſive Day;
Far as the Breeze can bear the Gifts of Peace,
Till all the happy Nations catch the Song.

What would not, Peace! the *Patriot* bear for Thee?
What painful Patience? What inceſſant Care?
What mixt Anxiety? What ſleepleſs Toil?
Even from the raſh Protected what Reproach?
For He thy Value knows; thy Friendſhip He
To human Nature: but the better thou,
The richer of Delight, ſometimes the more

Inevitable War; when ruffian Force
Awakes the Fury of an injur'd State:
Then the good eaſy Man, whom Reaſon rules;
Who, while unhurt, knew nor Offence, nor Harm,
Rouz'd by bold Inſult, and injurious Rage,
With ſharp, and ſudden Check, th' aſtoniſh'd Sons
Of Violence confounds; firm as his Cauſe,
His bolder Heart; in awful Juſtice clad;
His Eyes effulging a peculiar Fire:
And, as he charges thro' the proſtrate War,
His keen Arm teaches faithleſs Men, no more
To dare the ſacred Vengeance of the Juſt.

And what, my thoughtleſs *Sons*, ſhould fire you more,
Than when your well-earn'd Empire of the Deep
The leaſt beginning Injury receives?
What better Cauſe can call your Lightning forth?
Your Thunder wake? Your deareſt Life demand?
What better Cauſe, than when your Country ſees
The ſly Deſtruction at her Vitals aim'd?
For Oh it much imports you, 'tis your All,
To keep your *Trade* intire, intire the Force,
And Honour of your *Fleets*; o'er that to watch,
Even with a Hand ſevere, and jealous Eye.
In Intercourſe be gentle, generous, juſt,

By Wiſdom poliſh'd, and of Manners fair;
But on the Sea be terrible, untam'd,
Inconquerable ſtill: let none eſcape,
Who ſhall but aim to touch your Glory there.
Is there the Man, into the Lyon's Den
Who dares intrude, to ſnatch his Young away?
And is a *Briton* ſeiz'd? and ſeiz'd beneath
The ſlumbring Terrors of a *Britiſh Fleet*?
Then ardent riſe! Oh great in Vengeance riſe!
O'erturn the Proud, teach Rapine to reſtore:
And as you ride ſublimely round the World,
Make every Veſſel ſtoop, make every State
At once their Welfare and their Duty know.
This is your Glory; this your Wiſdom; this
The native Power for which you were deſign'd
By *Fate*, when *Fate* deſign'd the firmeſt State,
That e'er was ſeated on the ſubject Sea;
A State, alone, where LIBERTY ſhould live,
In theſe late Times, this Evening of Mankind,
When *Carthage*, *Rome*, and *Athens* are no more,
The World almoſt in ſlaviſh Sloth diſſolv'd.
For this, theſe Rocks around your Coaſt were thrown;
For this, your Oaks, peculiar harden'd, ſhoot
Strong into ſturdy Growth; for this, your Hearts
Swell with a ſullen Courage, growing ſtill

As Danger grows; and Strength, and Toil for this
Are liberal pour'd o'er all the fervent Land.
Then cheriſh this, this unexpenſive Power,
Undangerous to the *Publick*, ever prompt,
By laviſh *Nature* thruſt into your Hand:
And, unencumber'd with the Bulk immenſe
Of Conqueſt, whence huge Empires roſe, and fell,
Self-cruſh'd, extend your Reign from Shore to Shore,
Where-e'er the Wind your high Beheſts can blow,
And fix it deep on this eternal Baſe.
For ſhould the ſliding Fabrick once give Way,
And on the Brink of Fate begin to nod,
Soon blacken'd quite, and paſt Recovery broke,
It gathers *Ruin* as it rowls along,
Steep-ruſhing down to that devouring Gulph,
Where many a mighty Empire buried lies.
And ſhould the big redundant Flood of *Trade*,
In which ten thouſand thouſand *Labours* join
Their ſeveral Currents, till the boundleſs Tide
Rolls in a radiant Torrent o'er the Land,
Fruitful of Wealth, Magnificence, and Joy,
Of every glittering Harveſt, richer far
Than what *Heſperian* Gardens bore of old;
Should this bright Stream, the leaſt inflected, point
Its Courſe another Way, o'er other Lands

The *various Treaſure* would reſiſtleſs pour,
Ne'er to be won again; its antient Tract
Left a vile Channel, deſolate, and dead,
With all around a miſerable Waſte.
Not *Egypt*, were, her better Heaven, the *Nile*
Turn'd in the Pride of Flow; when o'er his Rocks,
And roaring Cataracts, beyond the Reach
Of dizzy Viſion pil'd, in one wide Flaſh
An *Ethiopian* Deluge foams amain;
(Whence wond'ring *Fable* trac'd him from the Sky)
Even not that Prime of Earth, where Harveſts croud
On untill'd Harveſts, all the teeming Year,
If of the fat, o'erflowing Culture robb'd,
Were then a more uncomfortable Wild,
Steril, and void; than of her Trade depriv'd,
Britons, your boaſted Iſle: Her Princes ſunk;
Her high-built Honour moulder'd to the Duſt;
Unnerv'd her Force; her Spirit vaniſh'd quite;
With rapid Wing her Riches fled away;
Her unfrequented Ports alone the Sign
Of what ſhe was; her Merchants ſcatter'd wide;
Her hollow Shops ſhut up; and in her Streets,
Her Fields, Woods, Markets, Villages, and Roads,
The chearful Voice of *Labour* heard no more.

Oh let not then waſte *Luxury* impair
That manly Soul of Toil, which ſtrings your Nerves,
And your own proper Happineſs creates!
Oh let not the ſoft, penetrating Plague
Creep on the free-born Mind! And working there,
With the ſharp Tooth of many a new-form'd Want,
Endleſs, and idle all, eat out the Heart
Of Liberty; the high Conception blaſt;
The noble Sentiment, th' impatient Scorn
Of baſe Subjection, and the ſwelling Wiſh
For general Good, erazing from the Mind:
While nought ſave narrow *Selfiſhneſs* ſucceeds,
And low Deſign, the gloomy Paſſions all
Let looſe, and reigning in the rankled Breaſt.
Induc'd at laſt, by ſcarce-perceiv'd Degrees,
Sapping the very Frame of Government,
And Life, a total *Diſſolution* comes:
Sloth, Ignorance, Dejection, Flattery, Fear,
Oppreſſion raging o'er the Waſte He makes;
The human Being almoſt quite extinct;
And the whole State in broad *Corruption* ſinks.
Oh ſhun that Gulph! That gaping Ruin ſhun!
And countleſs Ages roll it far away
From you, ye Heaven-belov'd! May Liberty,

The Light of Life! the Sun of human kind!
Whence *Heroes*, *Bards*, and *Patriots* borrow Flame,
Even where the keen depreſſive *North* deſcends,
Still ſpread, exalt, and actuate your Powers!
While ſaviſh *Southern* Climates beam in vain:
And may a *publick Spirit* from the THRONE,
Where every *Virtue* ſits, go copious forth
Wide o'er the Land! the *finer Arts* inſpire;
Make thoughtful *Science* raiſe his penſive Head,
Blow the freſh *Bay*, bid *Induſtry* rejoice,
And the rough *Sons* of loweſt *Labour* ſmile.
As when, profuſe of Spring, the looſen'd *Weſt*
Lifts up the pining Year, and luſcious breathes
Youth, Life, and Love, and Beauty o'er the World.

BUT haſte We from theſe melancholly Shores,
Nor to deaf Winds, and Waves, our fruitleſs Plaint
Pour out; the Country claims our active Aid;
That let Us rome; and where we find a Spark
Of *publick Virtue*, blow it into Flame.
The THRONE be chief our Care; th' ætherial Streams
Of Wiſdom, Juſtice, and Benevolence,
That iſſue thence, refreſhing all the Land,
Joyous to ſwell: and o'er the lovely Round
Of ROYAL BEAUTY, which about it glows,

To hover fond, prophetick of thoſe Days
That, FREDERICK! dawn delightful in thy Eye.
And now my *Sons*, the *Sons of Freedom*! meet
In awful Senate; thither let us fly;
Burn in the *Patriot*'s Thought, flow from his Tongue
In fearleſs Truth; myſelf, transform'd, *preſide*,
And ſhed the Spirit of BRITANNIA round.

THIS ſaid; her fleeting Form, and airy Train,
Sunk in the Gale; and nought but ragged Rocks
Ruſh'd on the broken Eye; and nought was heard
But the rough Cadence of the daſhing Wave.

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